

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

TRANSMITTAL LETTER NO. 3-

Washington, D. C. 20405

REGULATIONS OF THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
TITLE 3, FEDERAL RECORDS

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

1. Material Transmitted

Attached are revised sections 101.02 and 101.03, Chapter I; new section 101.04, Chapter I; new Chapters II and III; and new section 103.00, Chapter IV, of Title 3, Federal Records, Regulations of the General Services Administration.

2. Nature of Revisions and Additions

Section 101.02 is revised to show United States Code citations currently applicable as authority for Title 3 Regulations.

Section 101.03 is revised to include definitions of "Federal agency" and "executive agency."

New section 101.04 defines the term "records" as used in this Title.

New Chapter II prescribes regulations governing the creation of Federal records. Part 1 contains general provisions for the establishment of effective controls over the creation of records by Federal agencies. Parts 2 through 5 cover agency program responsibilities for the management of correspondence, reports, forms, and directives, respectively.

New Chapter III prescribes regulations governing the organization, maintenance and use of current Federal records. Part 1 contains general provisions for the establishment of effective controls over the maintenance and use of records by Federal agencies. Parts 2 through 4 cover agency program responsibilities for the management of mail, files, and records equipment and supplies, respectively.

New section 103.00, Chapter IV, prescribes standards for the selective retention of records having continuing value.

3. Effective Date

The regulations transmitted herewith are effective

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

TITLE 3 FEDERAL RECORDS

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TITLE 3 FEDERAL RECORDS

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

SECTION 101.00 GENERAL

101.01 Purpose. The Regulations in this Title prescribe policies and methods for the economical and efficient management of records of Federal agencies.

101.02 Authority. The Regulations in this Title are issued pursuant to the authority contained in the Act of July 7, 1943 (57 Stat. 380), as amended (44 U.S.C. 366-376, 378-380), hereinafter referred to as the Records Disposal Act, and the records provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (63 Stat. 377), as amended (44 U.S.C. 391-396, 397-401).

101.03 Applicability. The Regulations in this Title apply to all Federal agencies to the extent provided in the Acts cited in section 101.02. Section 3 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act (40 U.S.C. 472) defines "Federal agency" as "any executive agency or any establishment in the legislative or judicial branch of the Government (except the Senate, House of Representatives, and the Architect of the Capitol and any activities under his direction)." The same section defines "executive agency" as "any executive department or independent establishment in the executive branch of the Government, including any wholly owned Government corporation."

101.04 Records Defined. Section 1 of the Records Disposal Act (44 U.S.C. 366) defines the term "records," as applied to the disposition of records, to include "all books, papers, maps, photographs, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any agency of the United States Government in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data contained therein. Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included within the definition of the word 'records' * * * ."

GSA Reg. 3-I-101.04 (Contd. 2)

This definition also applies to the term "records" when used in the Federal Records Act of 1950, by virtue of section 511(a) thereof (44 U.S.C. 401 (a)). The Federal Records Act of 1950 was enacted as Title V (sections 501-511) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 391-396, 397-401).

CHAPTER II CREATION OF RECORDS

PART 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 101.00 GENERAL

101.01 Scope.

- a. Sections 505 and 506 of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395 and 396) place upon the Administrator of General Services and the heads of Federal agencies responsibility for the development and implementation of standards and programs for the economical and efficient management of Federal records. Specifically, the Act requires that each Federal agency provide for effective controls over the creation of records, including the making of records containing adequate and proper documentation of agency administration and operations.
- b. Effective controls over records creation must encompass all types of records at all levels of organization, central office and field. Specifically, there are four types of records which require continuing attention. These types--correspondence, reports, forms, and directives--are common to all agencies. Generally these records are created on sheets of paper, but they may also appear on punch cards, film, tape, and other media.

101.02 Agency Action.

- a. The head of each Federal agency is expected to take appropriate action to meet the requirements of Section 506 of the Federal Records Act of 1950 for controlling the creation of records and to observe the program responsibilities and documentation standards set forth in this chapter.
- b. Such action will include:
 1. The assignment to an office(s) of the agency of the responsibility for the development and implementation of agencywide management programs for correspondence, reports, forms, and directives and for adequate and proper documentation. When organization arrangement, size, or complexity requires, actual control may be established at bureau, service, or office level. Programs at these control points will operate within the framework of the overall agency plan.
 2. The issuance of a directive(s) establishing program objectives, responsibilities, and authorities.
- c. As evidence of action, agencies are requested to forward a copy of each such directive (and subsequent amendments or supplements) to the National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration.

GSA Reg, 3-II-101.03

101.03 Appraising Program Effectiveness. Each agency should provide for a periodic appraisal of the effectiveness of its programs for managing correspondence, reports, forms, and directives. Effectiveness will be measured in terms of progress toward established agency program goals and evaluated in terms of prescribed program coverage, desired inter- and intra-agency program working relationships, and recommended standards for program administration. Criteria developed for this purpose will be issued by the National Archives and Records Service.

101.04 Inspection of Agency Programs. Agency programs required by this chapter will be inspected periodically by the National Archives and Records Service, as authorized by Section 505(c) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395(c)). The program responsibilities set forth in this chapter, together with standards included in GSA Records Management Handbooks, will serve as the basis for the inspections and for determining agency compliance with the provisions of the Federal Records Act of 1950.

SECTION 102.00 ADEQUATE AND PROPER DOCUMENTATION

102.01 Statutory Responsibilities.

- a. Section 505(a) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395(a)) vests in the Administrator of General Services responsibility for developing and issuing standards to improve the management of records.
- b. Section 506(a) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 396(a)) requires that the head of each Federal agency "shall cause to be made and preserved records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency and designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities."

102.02 Documentation Standards. To insure that adequate and proper records are made and preserved in the Federal Government, the following documentation standards will apply in each Federal agency:

- a. The record of the transaction of public business by any Federal official or employee is to be complete to the extent required (1) to facilitate informed action by the incumbents and their successors in office; (2) to make possible a proper scrutiny by the Congress, other duly authorized agencies of the Government, and people properly concerned, of the manner in which public business has been discharged; and (3) to protect the financial, legal, and other rights of the Government and of persons affected by the Government's actions.
- b. With particular regard to the formulation and execution of basic Government policy, Federal officials are responsible for incorporating in the records of their agencies all essential information on their major actions. Significant decisions and commitments reached orally (person to person, by telephone, or in conference) should be reduced to writing and included in the record. Minutes should be taken at important board, committee, and staff meetings, and these, together with a copy of the agenda and all documents considered at or resulting from such meetings, should be made a part of the record.
- c. The programs, policies, and procedures of Federal agencies are to be adequately documented in appropriate directives. A record copy of each such directive (including those superseded) will be maintained as a part of the official files.
- d. Papers of a private or nonofficial character which pertain only to an individual's personal affairs that are kept in the office of a Federal official will be clearly designated by him as nonofficial and will at all times be filed separately from the official records of his office.

GSA Reg. 3-II-102.02 (Contd.2)

In cases where matters requiring the transaction of official business are received in private personal correspondence, the portion of such correspondence that pertains to official business will be extracted and made a part of the official files (see Chapter IV, section 106.06).

SECTION 103.00 CREATING RECORDS ESSENTIAL FOR CURRENT BUSINESS

103.01 Statutory Responsibilities.

- a. Section 505(a) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395(a)), vests in the Administrator of General Services responsibility for developing and issuing standards to improve the management of records and for promoting the efficient utilization of space, equipment, and supplies needed for records.
- b. Section 506(b) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 396(b)) requires that the head of each Federal agency "shall establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of the records of the agency. Such program shall, among other things, provide for (1) effective controls over the creation . . . of records in the conduct of current business." Correspondence, reports, forms, and directives are the principal types of records created on a current basis by Federal agencies.

103.02 General Requirements. Positive action is to be taken to prevent the making of unnecessary records. Existing and proposed office procedures are to be subject to continuing examination by agency management with a view to determining their effect on record making. Where justified, such procedures will be revised, transferred, or eliminated so as to keep record making to a necessary minimum. In addition, the detailed program requirements for correspondence, reports, forms, and directives management set forth in the following sections of this chapter are to be observed.

PART 2 CORRESPONDENCE

SECTION 201.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

201.01 The Correspondence Management Function. The objectives of correspondence management are to limit correspondence to essential requirements, and to improve the quality of necessary correspondence, providing for its creation in an economical and efficient manner.

201.02 Correspondence Defined. Correspondence is a generic term including letters, form letters, telegrams, memorandums, endorsements, summary sheets, postal cards, memo routing slips, and other written communications.

201.03 Program Requirements. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a correspondence management program as provided by section 101.02 of this chapter. The program will:

- a. Prescribe the types of correspondence to be used in official agency communications.
- b. Establish and implement agency standards concerning the number and kind of copies required, their distribution and purpose.
- c. Implement the correspondence standards set forth in the U.S. Government Correspondence Manual and in pertinent GSA Records Management Handbooks, with such modifications as may be necessary for specialized agency practices not covered by the publications.
- d. Implement the Government-wide standards issued by the General Services Administration for the procurement and use of letterheads, manifold paper, memorandum forms, and envelopes.
- e. Review, on a continuing basis, agency correspondence practices and procedures to determine opportunities for improvement and simplification.

Standards, guides, and instructions developed for the agency correspondence management program are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and revision. They should be readily available to those who write, review, sign, type, and file correspondence.

201.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a correspondence management program:

- a. Prepare only necessary correspondence and essential copies.
- b. Use form letters to the maximum extent possible following the standards, guides, and principles set forth in the GSA Records Management Handbook, Form Letters.

GSA Reg. 3-II-201.04 (Contd. 2)

- c. Employ guide letters and paragraphs where practical, following the standards, guides, and principles set forth in the GSA Records Management Handbook, Guide Letters.
- d. Originate letters that are carefully planned, easily read and understood, and responsive to the needs of the recipient by applying the standards, guides, and principles set forth in the GSA Records Management Handbook, Plain Letters.
- e. Prepare correspondence that is consistent in style and format, neat and attractive in appearance, and editorially correct by applying the standards, guides, and principles set forth in the U.S. Government Correspondence Manual.
- f. Develop and implement procedures that expedite the clearance and handling of correspondence.
- g. Provide for periodic spotchecks of agency correspondence activities to determine compliance with standards.

PART 3 REPORTS

SECTION 301.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

301.01 The Reports Management Function. The objectives of reports management are to provide agency management officials with needed information at times and places, and in the forms most useful to it; and to furnish this information as economically and efficiently as possible.

301.02 Report Defined.

- a. A report is recorded data or information transmitted for use in evaluating performance, controlling operations, determining policy, or preparing other reports. The data or information may be in narrative, statistical, graphic, or other form.
- b. Certain categories of reports normally are exempted from agency reports management programs. These include: investigative and audit reports; informational copies of personnel transaction documents; annual and supplemental budget estimates, justifications, and supporting information; individual supply and procurement transactions; and information presentations, such as research findings, technical summaries, special studies, projects, or surveys. Reports to be exempted should be determined by an analysis of agency information requirements.
- c. Reports to and from other agencies, as well as those for internal management, are included in a reports management program.

301.03 Program Requirements.

- a. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a reports management program as provided by section 101.02 of this chapter. The program will:
 1. Establish and implement standards and procedures for the initiation, review, approval, identification, preparation, and distribution of agency reports.
 2. Provide continuous information concerning the number and types of reports in use and the estimated cost of obtaining, using, and maintaining them.
 3. Provide for the periodic review of approved reports for need, design, and economy of preparation and use.
- b. Standards, guides, and instructions developed for the reports management program are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and revision. They should be readily available to reports originators and users.

GSA Reg. 3-II-301.04

301.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a reports management program:

- a. Establish and maintain an inventory of all agency reports.
- b. Analyze all reports inventoried and all reports proposed in the future to determine if:
 1. The report is necessary, meaningful, and useful.
 2. Consolidation with another report is feasible.
 3. The cost of the report is commensurate with its intended use.
- c. Assign a report number to each approved report.
- d. Require that requests for each new report justify its essentiality and estimate the cost to produce and use.
- e. Require that each report be supported by a directive setting forth instructions for preparing, submitting, and using.

PART 4 FORMS

SECTION 401.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

401.01 The Forms Management Function. The objectives of forms management are to reduce clerical costs incident to filling in, using, and filing forms; to achieve savings in designing, printing, storing, and distributing forms; and to increase the usefulness of forms through proper design and accurate using procedures.

401.02 Form Defined. A form is any document, including letters, post cards, and memorandums, printed or otherwise reproduced with space for filling in information, descriptive material, or addresses. Certain printed items without fill-in space, such as contract provisions, instruction sheets, notices, tags, labels, and posters, may be considered as forms when it is advantageous to identify and control them as forms for purposes of reference, printing, stocking, distribution, and use with other forms.

401.03 Program Requirements.

- a. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a forms management program as provided by section 101.02 of this chapter. The program will:
 1. Establish and implement standards and procedures for the submission, review, approval, and identification of agency forms.
 2. Implement the forms analysis and design standards set forth in pertinent GSA Records Management Handbooks.
 3. Establish and implement standards for the reproduction, stocking, and distribution of approved blank forms.
 4. Provide continuous information concerning the number, types, and the reproduction and stocking costs of forms in use.
 5. Provide for the periodic review of all approved forms for need and design, and for possible economies in reproduction, stocking, and distribution.
- b. Standards, guides, procedures, and instructions developed for the forms management program are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and review. They should be readily available to those who initiate, design, and approve forms.

401.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a forms management program:

- a. Establish and maintain an inventory of all agency forms.

GSA Reg. 3-II-401.04 (Contd. 2)

- b. Analyze all forms inventoried and all forms submitted for approval in the future in accordance with standards, guides, and principles set forth in the GSA Records Management Handbook, Forms Analysis.
- c. Review all forms inventoried and all forms prepared in the future for adequacy of design, maintaining the standards, guides, and principles set forth in the GSA Records Management Handbook, Forms Design.
- d. Assign a form number and edition date to each approved form.
- e. Review all requests for new forms and reprints of approved forms to determine that the forms are produced and made available quickly and cheaply. Specifically determine that:
 - 1. The most effective and economical methods of printing, packaging, and transporting the form are employed, commensurate with required quality and intended use of the form.
 - 2. Proper and adequate inventory level standards have been established.
 - 3. The quantity of the form requested is compatible with procedural and inventory requirements.
 - 4. An acceptable distribution plan exists for making the form available when and where needed.
- f. Require that each form be supported by a directive setting forth instructions for preparing, submitting, and using. (Not applicable to simple self-explanatory forms used by a single organizational element such as an office, division, or region.)
- g. Require that requests for each new form justify its essentiality.

PART 5 DIRECTIVES

SECTION 501.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

501.01 The Directives Management Function. The objectives of directives management are to facilitate agency administration and operations by providing the right employee with the right instructions; by producing instructions that are complete, easily understood, readily accessible, and revisable; and by developing and distributing instructions promptly and economically.

501.02 Directive Defined.

- a. A directive is a written communication which initiates or governs action, conduct, or procedure. Directives are usually printed as circulars, notices, regulations, orders, and handbooks, and include material for policy, administrative, and operations manuals.
- b. Certain materials normally are exempted from agency directives management programs. These include public information materials such as professional publications, news releases and announcements of programs, catalogs, and pricelists.
- c. Both internal and external directives are included in a directives management program.

501.03 Program Requirements.

- a. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a directives management program as provided by section 101.02 of this chapter. The program will:
 1. Establish and maintain a system for the classification, codification, and supplementation of agency directives.
 2. Establish and implement standards and procedures for the initiation, review, approval of reproduction, preparation, and distribution of proposed agency directives.
 3. Establish and implement standards for the format and editorial style of agency directives.
 4. Review periodically the directives in the system for need and currency and to identify subject voids that should be filled by the origination of new directives.
 5. Review, on a continuing basis, the directives system to determine opportunities for design and operational improvements.

GSA Reg. 3-II-501.04

6. Preserve a master set of all directives for deposit in the National Archives.
- b. Standards, guides, and instructions developed for the directives management program are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and revision. They should be readily available to those responsible for originating and approving directives.

501.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a directives management program:

- a. Standardize the format, typography, organization, assembly, and distribution of agency directives. Specifically:
 1. Use 8" x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " page size as a norm.
 2. Use looseleaf pages for easy revision.
 3. Print on both sides of paper.
 4. Number and letter directives for easy page revision and supplementation.
 5. Identify temporary and permanent material by a feature that will readily distinguish one from another.
 6. Prepunch all pages - 3-hole punch, 3/8" recommended.
 7. Restrict use of pen and ink changes.
 8. Distribute on a need-to-know and need-to-act basis.
- b. Analyze all directives proposed for inclusion in the system to determine that:
 1. The directive is necessary.
 2. No duplication, overlap, or conflict with other directives exists.
 3. The directive conforms with pertinent laws, regulations, Executive orders, and agency policy.
 4. Appropriate coordination and clearances have been completed.
 5. The proposed distribution includes appropriate using sources, but is limited to those who "need to know."
- c. Review all directives proposed for inclusion in the system for conformance with agency style, format, and editorial criteria.

CHAPTER III ORGANIZATION, MAINTENANCE,
AND USE OF CURRENT RECORDS

PART 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 101.00 GENERAL

101.01 Scope.

- a. Sections 505 and 506 of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395 and 396) place with the Administrator of General Services and the heads of Federal agencies responsibility for the development and implementation of standards and programs for the economical and efficient management of Federal records. Specifically, the Act requires that each Federal agency provide for effective controls over the maintenance (including organization) and the use of records in the conduct of current business.
- b. To be effective, controls over records organization, maintenance, and use must be applied at all levels of organization, central office and field, in connection with mail handling and delivery, files operations, and the procurement and use of records equipment and supplies.

101.02 Statutory Responsibilities.

- a. Section 505(a) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395(a)) places in the Administrator of General Services responsibility for developing and issuing standards to improve the management of records and for promoting the efficient utilization of space, equipment, and supplies needed for records.
- b. Section 506(b) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 396(b)) requires that the head of each Federal agency "shall establish and maintain an active continuing program for the economical and efficient management of the records of the agency. Such program shall, among other things, provide for (1) effective controls over the . . . maintenance and use of records in the conduct of current business."

101.03 Agency Action.

- a. The head of each Federal agency is expected to take appropriate action to meet the requirements of Section 506 of the Federal Records Act of 1950 for controlling the maintenance and use of records and to observe the program responsibilities set forth in this chapter.

GSA Reg. 3-III-101.04

b. Such action will include:

1. The assignment, to an office(s) of the agency, of the responsibility for the development and implementation of agencywide management programs for mail, files, and records equipment and supplies. When organization arrangement, size, or complexity requires, actual control may be established at bureau, service, or office level. Programs at these control points will operate within the framework of the overall agency plan.
2. The issuance of a directive(s) establishing program objectives, responsibilities, and authorities.

c. As evidence of action, agencies are requested to forward a copy of each such directive issued (and subsequent amendments or supplements) to the National Archives and Records Service.

101.04 Appraising Program Effectiveness. Each agency should provide for a periodic appraisal of the effectiveness of its programs for managing mail, files, and records equipment and supplies. Effectiveness will be measured in terms of progress toward established agency program goals and evaluated in terms of prescribed program coverage, desired inter- and intra-agency relationships, and recommended standards for program administration. Criteria developed for this purpose will be issued by the National Archives and Records Service.

101.05 Inspection of Agency Programs. Agency programs required by this chapter will be inspected periodically by the National Archives and Records Service, as authorized by Section 505(c) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 395(c)). The program responsibilities set forth in this chapter, together with standards included in the GSA Records Management Handbooks, will serve as the basis for the inspections and for determining agency compliance with the provisions of the Federal Records Act of 1950.

PART 2 MAIL

SECTION 201.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

201.01 The Mail Management Function. The objective of mail management is to provide rapid handling and accurate delivery of mail throughout the agency at minimum cost. Processing steps are kept to a necessary minimum; sound principles of work flow are applied; modern equipment, supplies, and devices are used; and, in general, operations are kept as simple as possible, so as to increase efficiency.

201.02 Mail Defined. Mail consists of letters, telecommunications, memorandums, post cards, packages, publications, and other communications received for distribution or dispatch.

201.03 Program Requirements.

- a. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a mail management program as provided by section 101.04 of this chapter. The program will:
 1. Establish and implement standards and procedures for the receipt, delivery, collection, and dispatch of mail.
 2. Implement the mail management standards set forth in the GSA Records Management Handbook, Agency Mail Operations.
 3. Provide continuous information concerning the volume and types of mail processed and time requirements for internal delivery and mailing.
 4. Review, on a continuing basis, agency mail practices and procedures to determine opportunities for improvement and simplification.
- b. Standards, guides, and instructions developed for the agency mail management program are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and revision. They should be readily available to those concerned with mail and messenger operations. In addition, pertinent information for users of mail and messenger services should be given the widest possible dissemination.

201.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a mail management program:

- a. Deliver mail to the action office within shortest possible time after receipt. (Objective should be 4-to 6-hour delivery.)

GSA Reg. 3-III-201.04 (Contd. 2)

- b. Establish realistic time limits for replying to White House and Congressional mail, and to public correspondence. Avoid preparing letters of a purely acknowledgment nature.
- c. Limit mail followup control to security mail or mail important because of its source or content.
- d. Make maximum and proper use of Post Office Department services and facilities.
- e. Develop and install procedures that expedite and limit mail clearance, reviews, and signing.
- f. Provide central control with established schedules for messenger services.

PART 3 FILES

SECTION 301.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

301.01 The Files Management Function. The objectives of files management are to organize agency files so that needed records can be found rapidly, complete records are ensured, the selection and retention of records of archival value are facilitated, and the disposition of noncurrent records is accomplished promptly. All services are to be performed with maximum economy in personnel, equipment, and supplies.

301.02 File Defined. A file is basically a folder of papers, but the term is used to denote papers, photographs, photographic copies, maps, or other recording media regardless of physical form or characteristics, accumulated or maintained in filing equipment, boxes, or on shelves, and occupying office or storage space. Stocks of publications and blank forms are excluded.

301.03 Program Requirements.

- a. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a files management program as provided by section 101.04 of this chapter. The program will:
 1. Establish and implement standards and procedures for:
 - (a) Classifying, indexing, and filing records.
 - (b) Providing reference services to filed records.
 - (c) Locating active files to facilitate agency use of records.
 2. Implement the files classification, operations, and placement standards set forth in pertinent GSA Records Management Handbooks.
 3. Review the program periodically to determine the adequacy of the system and its effectiveness in meeting requests.
- b. Standards, guides, and instructions developed for the files management program are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and revision. They should be readily available to all employees concerned with files operations. In addition, pertinent information for users of files and reference services should be given the widest possible dissemination.

301.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a files management program:

- a. Standardize classification and filing schemes to achieve maximum uniformity and ease in maintaining and using agency records.

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- b. Formally authorize official file locations. Prohibit the maintenance of files at other than authorized locations.
- c. Standardize reference service procedures to facilitate the finding, chargeout and refiling of agency records.
- d. File accumulations of papers received at file locations on a daily basis.
- e. Standardize, to the maximum extent possible, the equipment and supplies used in filing and reference service operations. Use standard items stocked by the Federal Supply Service.
- f. Audit periodically a representative sample of the files for misclassification or misfiles.

PART 4 RECORDS EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

SECTION 401.00 AGENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

401.01 Managing Records Equipment and Supplies. The objectives of a records equipment and supplies management program are to ensure that equipment and supplies necessary and suitable to agency records operations, procedurally and economically, are available and are put to proper use. Modern equipment and supplies are now manufactured in a wide variety of types which, in most instances, are designed for special uses. Competent advice should be continuously available to assure that the correct item is obtained for a given purpose.

401.02 Records Equipment and Supplies Defined. Equipment and supplies include file cabinets, shelf files, visible files, mechanized files, file guides, folders, jackets, wallets, and similar items used in the creation and maintenance of records and in mail handling. A program for managing equipment and supplies may also cover desk-top office machines, dictating and recording equipment, and data recording equipment.

401.03 Program Requirements.

- a. Each Federal agency is expected to establish a program for managing records equipment and supplies as provided by section 101.04 of this chapter. The program will:
 1. Establish and implement standards and procedures for:
 - (a) Standardization of records equipment and supplies used by the agency.
 - (b) Submission, review, and approval of requests for the purchase of records equipment and supplies.
 - (c) Proper utilization of presently owned records equipment.
 2. Review, on a continuing basis, the utilization of records equipment to ensure adequate and proper application.
 3. Provide for a continuing review of new developments in the field of records equipment and supplies and their possible application to agency records systems.
- b. Standards, guides, and instructions for managing records equipment and supplies are to be in published form, designed for easy reference and revision. They should be readily available to program officials responsible for operations using records equipment and supplies.

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401.04 Program Implementation. The following actions are basic to a records equipment and supplies management program:

- a. Minimize equipment and supplies needs by providing for prompt disposition of records. Reduce or eliminate the need for additional equipment by freeing equipment on hand for re-use.
- b. Use, to the maximum extent possible, standard items listed in the General Services Administration Stores Stock Catalog and Federal Supply Schedules. Prohibit the purchase of nonstandard items unless justification for exception is submitted and approved.
- c. Review requests for purchase of equipment and supplies to determine essentiality and usability.
- d. Review use of currently owned and rented equipment to determine that it is essential, suitable, properly utilized and maintained, and updated as required.
- e. Analyze record keeping procedures and techniques to determine if requirements for equipment and supplies are realistic and if requirements can be reduced or eliminated through improved or changed procedures or techniques.

SECTION 103.00 STANDARDS FOR THE SELECTIVE RETENTION OF RECORDS

103.01 Authority. Section 506(a) of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 396(a)) requires the head of each Federal agency to have "made and preserved records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency." Section 505(b) directs the Administrator to establish standards for the selective retention of those records having continuing value, and to "assist Federal agencies in applying such standards to records in their custody."

103.02 Records Retention and Disposal Standards. The following standards govern the retention and disposal of agency records:

- a. Records Control Schedules. These disposition schedules, developed by each Federal agency for all records in its custody as provided by section 101.00 of this chapter, designate classes of records of continuing value identified in the records retention plans. The schedules also specify retention periods for records not of continuing value. Formulation and application of these schedules, to provide for the orderly retirement and reduction of records in each agency, is mandatory as provided by section 101.03 of this chapter.
- b. General Records Schedules. The schedules, issued by the Administrator, govern the retention and disposal of certain types of records common to all agencies. The schedules are permissive as provided by section 104.00 of this chapter.
- c. Records Retention Plans. A separate plan for each agency or subdivision thereof governs the selective retention of records of continuing value. The plans, which are developed by the National Archives and Records Service in cooperation with the agency, are integral parts of agency programs for records retention and disposal as provided for by section 103.03 following.

103.03 Permanently Valuable Records Retention Program. In an agency program to select permanently valuable records, the following five basic elements are present:

- a. The taking of a complete inventory of records in the custody of the agency as provided by section 101.00 of this chapter.
- b. The development by the National Archives and Records Service of a records retention plan designating the permanently valuable classes of records arising from agency functions.
- c. The identification by the agency of the specific records or segments of files allocated to the classes specified for retention by the plan developed by the National Archives and Records Service.

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- d. The orderly maintenance and segregation by the agency of the records identified under subparagraph "c."
- e. The conducting of periodic audits by the National Archives and Records Service to assure that the provisions of subparagraph "d" are being carried out.

103.04 Application of Records Retention Plans. Pursuant to the authority cited in section 103.01:

- a. The National Archives and Records Service will furnish agencies with records retention plans as rapidly as they are developed.
- b. Within six months after receipt of a plan, an agency will revise its records control schedules in accordance with the provisions of the plan to assure that all records designated in the plan are retained and periodically transferred to the National Archives or to a Federal Records Center, as appropriate.
- c. Until such time as a records retention plan is prepared for an agency, existing records control schedules remain in effect.
- d. Records retention plans are to be reviewed annually by the agency, in order to recommend necessary changes to the National Archives and Records Service.